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KNOWLEDGE

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OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY



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KNOWLEDGE

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

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FROM TRUCK TO TRASH

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This month, Americans will celebrate 234 years of our nation's independence and honor the courage of brave men and women who have kept our nation free.

Today, the entire Army team plays an important role in keeping our country free and sustaining the principles that make the United States a truly great nation. We could not succeed in this vital mission without the support of every Leader, Soldier, Family member and Civilian, and this is why we need our entire team to stay safe in everything you do. Whether working patrols in Afghanistan, enjoying some down time at home, running an electrical line at your local installation or enjoying time on the lake, your constant dedication to risk management honors those who have come before you and makes a difference in the success of all our efforts around the globe.

The Army team's strong commitment to safety has ushered us into a summer where we are seeing slightly fewer accidental deaths among our ranks, despite a startling increase in fatal privately owned vehicle and motorcycle accidents in May. While I am proud our Army has made gains on last year's historic reduction in fatal accidents, we cannot be content with only minor progress in our fight to save lives.

Although there are exceptions, the vast majority of our fatal POV and motorcycle accidents involve indiscipline, ranging from speeding, neglecting to wear seat belts and personal protective equipment or failing to get required motorcycle training. We've even had some accidents where all three of these factors were involved.

U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

Official Publication of the U.S. Army

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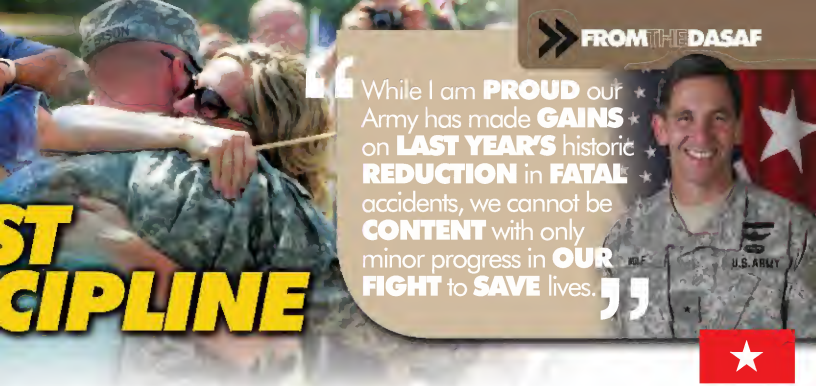
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Mission statement: The United States Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center (USACR/Safety Center) supports our Army by collecting, analyzing and communicating actionable information to assist Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Civilians in preserving/protecting our Army's combat resources.

We welcome your feedback. Please e-mail comments to **safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil**.

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Sadly, indiscipline in the form of speed was involved in two of our most recent POV fatalities. One Soldier was a passenger in a sports sedan driven by another Soldier when the vehicle spun out of control on loose gravel and rolled over into an embankment. In the second accident, a Soldier lost control of the sports sedan he was driving and crashed into a stand of small trees. Both Soldiers were scheduled to deploy overseas within just a few days of their deaths.

In the past, we've put a lot of emphasis on Leader engagement in enforcing standards, and every reduction in fatal accidents is proof engaged leadership works. Since our Soldiers may be on duty for only a few hours a day, the role of our entire team becomes that much more important. Getting the message across that indiscipline in any form is unacceptable isn't just a Leader thing; it's also an issue for our fellow Soldiers, Families and Civilians.

Peers, whether inside the Soldier's unit or outside, have tremendous influence on their friend's actions. Reaching all of our Soldiers and making them a part of the solution is extremely important in building an Army culture where safety is a way of life, not an on-the-job regulatory requirement. It's important to remember that peer pressure can be a positive thing, and that's the kind of environment we need to keep fatal accidents from happening.

Families are perhaps the most important stakeholders in Soldier safety. In recent years, our Army has done a great job in engaging spouses and their Families through Family Readiness Groups and Family Readiness Support Assistants with safety tools such as the Family Engagement Kit. But we cannot forget that young, single Soldiers comprise a large portion of our force, and their Families — parents, siblings and other close relatives — play just as important a role in risk management as military spouses. We must also tap this valuable resource if we want to keep all our Soldiers safe and in the fight.

Finally, we can never underestimate the power of our Civilian workforce. In an Army where change is certain, Civilians provide vital continuity for Leaders and Soldiers alike. They have a primary role to play in looking out for the entire team, including our Soldiers. One vital part of the Civilian workforce is our Civilian safety professionals at the installation and operational levels. They possess unparalleled knowledge and firsthand experience of the risks their Soldiers may encounter. Please take advantage of the continuity and experience of all our Civilians, but, most importantly, these safety professionals. Harness their expertise and let them help you in your fight against preventable accidents.

Every Soldier deserves a chance to serve their country honorably and safely. Whether you're a Leader, a Soldier, a Family member or a Department of the Army Civilian, please do your part to keep the Soldiers in your life safe. The USACR/Safety Center has some great tools to get you started, so check out our website (https://safety.army.mil) and let us know how we can better serve you.

Thank you for what you do every day for our Band of Brothers and Sisters. Enjoy this summer while it lasts. Play hard, but always play it safe.

Army Safe is Army Strong!



WILLIAM T. WOLF
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Army Safety

FIVE DEADLY WORDS

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During my two years at the National Training Center (NTC) as the senior aviation trainer, I saw many units train under extremely harsh conditions. After a brief period, it became obvious that most individuals were making the same mistakes.

During one particular rotation, the same unit incurred three aviation accidents. My curiosity was piqued. Why were these accidents occurring? I thought the answer might be in past accident reports. I gathered and read numerous reports from the NTC happening over an extended period. The accidents were both ground and air. As I read the material, I noticed certain words appeared repeatedly in the safety investigators' write-ups. These words described the cause of accident.

I began to highlight the words until it was obvious that five words were used consistently to describe why the accidents happened. Keep in mind, these were several different accidents — air and ground — and investigated by different officers. Even so, the same words described each accident most often. The words were:

1. **Untrained**
2. **Unsupervised**
3. **Undisciplined**
4. **Overconfident**
5. **Complacent**

Shortly after I finished my tour at the NTC, I was fortunate to take command of the 10th Aviation Brigade and we deployed to Afghanistan. I used the "five words" as my safety philosophy and challenged my leadership to be on the lookout for these five words in their units. I am convinced that every unit is in stages where one or more of the safety words could describe their current safety condition. I believe deeply that no matter how good or safe you think you are, your unit could be described by these five words. The challenge for Leaders is recognizing these potential hazards, mitigating the risks as much as possible and controlling the rest.



Conditions are constantly changing. This month, your unit may be untrained; however, six months from now, overconfidence or complacency might be your biggest problem. This is especially true of our great troops deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. A Leader must recognize and take action to deal with these deficiencies before an accident happens. The answer is simple and as old as the Army itself: Leaders take care of their Soldiers. That duty is all encompassing, touching almost every aspect of our personal and professional lives.

A Leader's responsibility for safety includes establishing an



organizational culture emphasizing the importance of safety. This is more than just safe-driving lectures. A safety culture is, instead, a continuing educational process that seeks to stimulate an attitude of true safety consciousness in every member of the unit.

A Leader must also supervise and take immediate and effective action against deviations from established standards. Inherent to authority is the obligation to issue and enforce policy. Too frequently, accident investigations reveal a fateful deviation from regulations. Supervision and enforcement can prevent many such occurrences. Be responsible and accountable for your Soldiers. Take a hard look inside your unit, assess the hazards and then give directions to fix them. Accomplishing this can't be done by sitting in an office. You set the tone and standards for your unit. "Walking the talk," means getting out and walking the flightline or motor pool and having that essential "eye-to-eye" commander involvement with Soldiers.

Furthermore, recognizing the five words in your unit shouldn't be shameful. Point out those deficiencies to your subordinates and superiors. Conversely, to deny the fact that your unit is untrained, unsupervised, undisciplined, overconfident or complacent is a dereliction of duty. The result can be disastrous if you don't fix those problems.

There are Leaders who fail to either recognize or believe their unit is unsafe. I saw this firsthand on several occasions. Here is an example. During a meeting with my subordinate Leaders, I conveyed my findings of our brigade assessment and gave direction to fix certain aspects. It was my nature to conduct the assessment and provide my evaluation, letting them correct the issues.

During the meeting, one of my noncommissioned officers (NCO) challenged me, saying his unit did not fall into any of those five-word categories. I disagreed and told him I would look at his unit and point out the mistakes. He respectfully invited me into the unit with the date and time coordinated.

On the way to the unit location, we positioned the aircraft for fuel at the forward arming and refueling point (FARP). As the aircraft went to idle, a refueler approached the aircraft. He was not wearing a shirt, gloves, helmet or eye protection. It was standard procedure in every unit to wear personal protective equipment in the FARP. The refueler proceeded to refuel the aircraft that he "knew" his brigade commander was occupying. Of course, I stopped him, shut down the aircraft and demanded the NCO who challenged me on my philosophy to report to the FARP to witness this breakdown in professional discipline and standards. It was not my intent to gloat but to merely point out how dangerous denial can be. I wasn't even looking for a deficiency at the time; however, there it was, an accident waiting to happen. If described in the accident report, it would have said, "The Soldier was undisciplined, overconfident and complacent in his duties."

I encourage every Leader to understand the risk management process and ensure safety awareness is ingrained in everything your Soldiers do. As commanders and supervisors, we are responsible for establishing and enforcing effective safety programs. My "five words" philosophy is a simple way to communicate the point. Don't hesitate to use the same idea. I hope my experience can help you be a more successful Leader and, better yet, save lives. If you can think of a better way, do it! «

WHERE'S YOUR NEXT ACCIDENT?

(AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?)

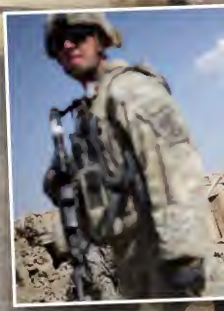
CAPT. MATTHEW TURCOTTE
2nd Battalion, 349th Regiment,
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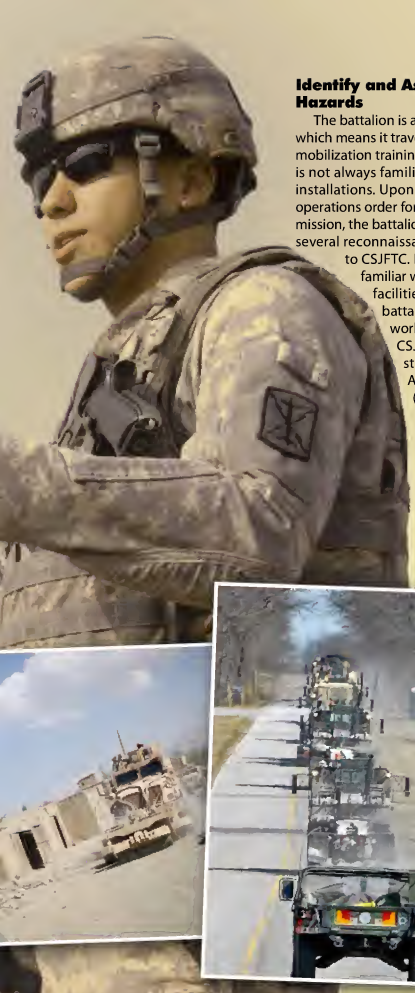
Good composite risk management (CRM) can set the stage for safe and successful post-mobilization training operations. This was true for the 2nd Battalion, 349th Regiment, 188th Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East, as they integrated CRM and military planning during three weeks of training. The unit conducted more than 220 accident-free convoys, most of which were during hours of darkness, that involved more than 3,500 vehicles.

The battalion commander's intent regarding safety was given before deploying from Fort Stewart, Ga., to Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center (CSJFTC), Miss. His goal was to foresee and effectively mitigate risks to prevent accidents during the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment's (ACR) post-mobilization training.

The 2nd Battalion ("Ready Support!"), 349th Regiment, joined other battalions in the 188th Infantry Brigade in planning, resourcing and validating post-mobilization training for National Guard and Army Reserve formations supporting the First Army Division East Army Force Generation process. The goal was to ensure combat commanders received fully trained, combat-ready forces for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Kosovo Force. During 2010, First Army Division East will mobilize, train and deploy roughly 93,000 Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, as well as Department of State and Department of Agriculture professionals.

During the 278th ACR's post-mobilization training at CSJFTC, the 188th Infantry Brigade's objective was to provide theater-focused training for the Soldiers of the 278th ACR in the conditions and scenarios they will likely encounter in Iraq. The "Ready Support!" battalion was tasked with conducting movement control center operations, which included traffic circulation and control around Camp Shelby. The battalion used the five steps of CRM — identify hazards; assess hazards to determine risk; develop controls and make risk decisions; implement controls; and supervise and evaluate — to ensure the 278th ACR safely conducted its post-mobilization training.





Identify and Assess Hazards

The battalion is an "away team," which means it travels to various mobilization training centers and is not always familiar with those installations. Upon receiving the operations order for the 278th ACR mission, the battalion deployed on several reconnaissance missions to CSJFTC. Becoming familiar with the training facilities and areas, the battalion's members worked closely with CSJFTC garrison staff, the 177th Armor Brigade (the home team), military police, the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol and Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) personnel.

The brigade and battalion began identifying hazards as they mapped out the training areas and routes on which convoys would be conducting operations. Convoy operations would consist of a minimum of five escort vehicles and a maximum of 20 vehicles, including tractor trucks (M1088s) with 20-foot trailers, during the three mission readiness exercises.

The most significant hazard identified by the battalion was an intersection that wasn't controlled by a traffic signal that led from Mississippi Highway 98 onto the Camp Shelby East Gate road entrance. To enter the CSJFTC training area, convoys of 20-plus vehicles would have to cross two lanes of oncoming traffic traveling at 65 mph. Several other crossing points along the highway were also identified and assessed as hazards.

Develop Controls and Make Risk Decisions

The battalion identified and assessed hazards on the civilian highways and determined there was an initial high level of risk. Controls were then developed and applied to lower those risks.

To develop the controls, the battalion discussed CRM options at the identified hazardous points with CSJFTC military police and 177th Armored Brigade. Unfortunately, CSJFTC doesn't control the traffic flow on Mississippi highways and hadn't established a standing operating procedure (SOP) to mitigate heavy traffic flow through these areas. Upon learning this, the battalion contacted MDOT for assistance.

In response, MDOT personnel came out the following day to review the dangerous intersection and placed two message boards along



Highway 98 stating, "CAUTION: CONVOY CROSSING." MDOT also set up a secondary message board to warn traffic that they were approaching the hazard, as well as barrels with rotating amber warning light systems (RAWLS) along the crossing point to further identify the area.

Once CRM controls along the highway were in place, MDOT personnel provided about two dozen more traffic barrels to identify crossing points on Highway 29. Unfortunately, MDOT was unable to supply more message boards for the highway due to other requirements, so the battalion developed its own message boards. Using two large map boards, the battalion placed signs at the north and south end of Highway 29 stating, "CAUTION: CONVOY CROSSING," in large text. In addition, RAWLS were then added to emphasize the signs. These combined efforts between the battalion and MDOT reduced the risk level from high to moderate.

Implement Controls

Risk management controls were then implemented by including them into a written order, mission briefing and SOP. The battalion published the Traffic Circulation and Control Annex to the mission operations order and provided it to all units involved in the training mission. The annex included movement operations, guidelines, overlays, convoy route descriptions, hazards and control measures along the routes, as well as key safety issues for the convoy commander's safety brief. The plan was established and disseminated throughout the ranks.

Supervise and Evaluate

By the time the exercise was ready to commence, the battalion had used CRM to mitigate the risks and fulfill the commander's intent. The final step was supervising and evaluating the training operations to ensure the controls were being enforced to standard. This provided the means to validate the effectiveness of the CRM controls in supporting the exercise's objectives and desired outcomes.

The operational task the battalion faced was bringing in the 104th Transportation Company (TC) from Fort Benning, Ga., to assist in the 278th ACR mobilization training. The transportation company's mission was to portray contracted and military truck drivers escorted by military forces as they move supplies around Iraq. The 104th TC convoyed from Fort Benning to Camp Shelby in multiple serials of 20 or more vehicles. Foreseeing the risks to the 104th TC at the intersection of Mississippi Highway 98 and the Camp Shelby East Gate entrance, the battalion requested the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol monitor the intersection and escort the 104th TC safely onto CSJFTC. The mission was a success, and the control measures proved effective.

Upon their safe arrival, the battalion briefed the 104th TC on the concept of operations,



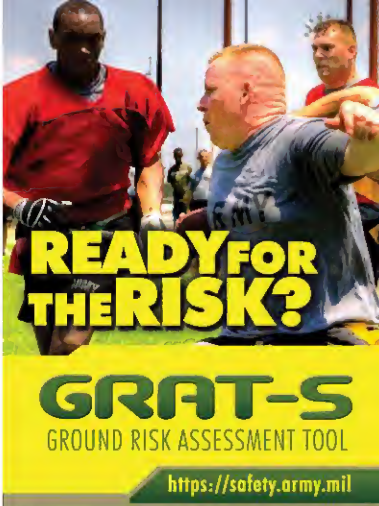
the traffic circulation and control procedures, safety and the CRM control measures in place. After the operations brief, the battalion led the 104th TC through a number of rehearsals, including reporting procedures, breakdown procedures, mission operations and route reconnaissance. The 104th TC then began internal planning and rehearsals to familiarize themselves with the hazards they were going to encounter on a daily basis. In addition, RAWLS were issued to each vehicle and strict motorpool SOPs were established.

Prior to every mission, the convoy commander would provide his Soldiers with an operations brief followed by an up-to-date risk assessment and safety brief. The brief included performing preventive maintenance checks and services before and after movement, current road condition status and hazards, weather reports, speed limit changes and the planned route. The briefing also ensured everyone had the medical evacuation, movement control team (MCT) and maintenance unit contact information.

The battalion practiced CRM daily, revising the risk assessment according to operational and weather changes and conditions. In addition, the battalion conducted numerous after-action reviews to identify any hazards that were not identified in the initial assessment or new hazards that evolved during the operation. The battalion also assessed the effectiveness of the control measures at eliminating hazards and reducing risks.

The Payoff

"Ready Support!" successfully completed the steps for CRM during this training. With the assistance of the 104th TC, the MCT conducted 228 convoys with more than 3,500 vehicles during the three weeks of training. Coordination with MDOT and the highway patrol successfully mitigated the risks, resulting in accident-free training. The commander's intent was met and the 278th ACR was prepared to deploy to Iraq. The success of CRM in planning, preparation, execution and assessment led to follow-on units implementing the same risk management controls for follow-on operations. «



HAS YOUR CAR HAD ITS CHECKUP?

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A well-maintained vehicle is a safer vehicle on the open road. As a company safety officer for my unit, I'm sometimes asked if vehicle inspections have been properly completed. My typical response is "yes and no." While it says on paper that they have been done, I know in the back of my mind that many were "pencil-whipped."

Fortunately, in the last three years I have been in this unit, we have not had a privately owned vehicle (POV) fatality. Unfortunately, I am concerned that may have created a false sense of security. So, as the safety officer, I do my best to provide reason and applicability to why we are required to practice safety as we do.

The first step in proper vehicle maintenance is to have it serviced according to the schedule in your owner's manual. At different mileage intervals, certain maintenance actions should be performed on your car by trained technicians. In addition, should you be stationed in a foreign country like my unit, there may be other inspections your vehicle must pass before it can be registered or driven. Beyond these things, however, there are simple checks you can do to help keep your vehicle safe on the road. By simply using your senses and checking the area around your vehicle for leaks, noticing unusual odors or listening for strange noises, you can often detect common vehicle problems.

For example, look at the area beneath your vehicle. Small stains or an occasional drop of fluid under your car may not mean much, but wet spots or puddles deserve attention. You may be losing coolant, engine oil or transmission or brake fluid.

Some problems just "smell" like trouble. Here are some examples:

- The smell of burnt toast — a light, sharp odor — often signals an electrical short with burning insulation. To be safe, do not drive the vehicle until the problem is diagnosed.
- The smell of rotten eggs — a continuous, burning, sulfur-like smell — usually indicates a problem in the catalytic converter or other emission-control device. Do not delay getting the problem diagnosed and repaired.
- The smell of gasoline vapors after a failed start could mean you have flooded the engine. However, if the odor persists, chances are there is a leak in the fuel system. This is a potentially dangerous problem requiring immediate attention.
- A sweet, steamy smell typically indicates a coolant leak. If the odor is accompanied by a hot, metallic scent and steam is coming from under the hood, your engine has overheated. Pull over immediately, as continued driving could cause severe engine damage.

Your car can "sound" like trouble too. Here are some common noises and what they could mean:

- **Squeals** — shrill, sharp noises usually related to engine speed — can indicate loose or worn power steering, fan or air-conditioner belts. Also, some vehicles have belt tensioners that can wear out and cause squealing.
- **Screeches** — high-pitched, piercing metallic sounds that usually occur while the vehicle is in motion — are often caused by brake wear indicators letting you know it's time to have your brakes serviced. Some brake systems are designed to make

a clicking or chirping sound as the brakes get to the point of needing maintenance.

- **Rumbles** — low-pitched, rhythmic sounds — could point to a defective exhaust pipe, catalytic converter or muffler, or could indicate a worn universal joint or other driveline component.
- **Heavy knocks** — rhythmic, pounding sounds — can indicate a worn crankshaft, connecting rod bearing(s) or a loose transmission torque converter.
- **Clunks** — random thumping sounds — could indicate a loose shock absorber or other suspension component. Clunks may also indicate a loose exhaust pipe or muffler.

You might be saying to yourself, "I'm not a mechanic." Despite that, the list below contains some things you can periodically check to keep your vehicle running safely. Hint — looking up these in your owner's manual will help you spot what to look for.

- Engine oil level and cleanliness under the hood
- Antifreeze/coolant level
- Brake and power steering fluid levels
- Transmission fluid
- Belts

Typically, you'll find the fluid reservoirs for the radiator, power steering and power brakes inside the engine compartment. Most will have fill-level lines marked on them. Ensure the fluid levels don't fall below the minimum line or go above the maximum line. Also under the hood you will find the dipsticks for the engine oil and automatic transmission fluid. It is important to read the instructions in your owner's manual on how to check these fluids. Also, keep an eye out for any leaks or worn tubes or hoses.

Other things to be watchful for include loose electrical connections, worn or exposed wires, warped or frayed accessory belts and damaged or loose hose clamps. You should also check your battery periodically for corrosion and to see when it should be replaced. The typical life of most batteries is three to five years. However, that can be shortened if you live in an area with extremely cold temperatures or if most of your commutes last less than 20 minutes.

You don't have to be a trained mechanic to keep your car in good running condition. A big part is just taking a little extra time to make sure your "wheels" get an occasional checkup. «



The Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Risk Management Toolbox is a tool for commanders, Leaders, supervisors and subordinates to use in their organizations. The toolbox contains best practice examples and lessons learned that can be used as accident prevention measures when developing a unit POV safety program.

Give It a Test Drive Today!

https://safety.army.mil/

STAR-SPANGLED Bummer

JEFF MILLER
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Every July Fourth, Americans gather at parades, barbecues and other events to celebrate our nation's independence. Traditionally, fireworks are the highlight of these celebrations. All too often, though, the night ends badly due to someone's carelessness. Unfortunately, I speak from experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there were seven fireworks-related deaths in 2008. Two people were killed in incidents involving aerial and display fireworks; one person died in a fire where a firework was the ignition source; three people were killed in incidents involving homemade fireworks; and one person, who was on oxygen, suffered serious burns and later died after a firecracker exploded near his face.

It was early in the evening and my friends and I were searching for something fun to do. We sent out text messages inviting other friends to come over to the house and eventually had a large crowd. So now what? We decided small explosives were the answer, so several of us piled into the car and headed to the nearest fireworks stand.

The fireworks at this particular stand were relatively inexpensive, which meant we were going to get a lot of bang for our buck. Almost $500 later, we realized it was time to head back to the party. We decided our neighborhood wasn't a good place to set off our stash, so we moved to a nearby field. (Side note: There



FYI

To help you safely celebrate the Fourth of July, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Council on Fireworks Safety offer the following tips:

- **Always read and follow label directions.**
- **Have an adult present.**
- **Buy from reliable sellers.**
- **Only use fireworks outdoors.**
- **Always have water handy (a garden hose and a bucket).**
- **Never experiment or make your own fireworks.**
- **Light only one firework at a time.**
- **Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 15 to 20 minutes, soak it in a bucket of water and then dispose of it in your trash can.**
- **Never give fireworks to small children.**
- **Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.**
- **Never throw or point fireworks at other people.**
- **Never carry fireworks in your pocket.**
- **Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers.**
- **The shooter should always wear eye protection and never have any part of the body over the firework.**
- **Stay away from illegal explosives.**

was no alcohol involved up to this point.) A friend pointed out that the field grass was really dry, so this also might not be the best location for our celebration. Regrettably, "management" gathered and decided we'd stay, and a small clay pit in the field would be our launching pad.

We started with the smaller fireworks, but the crowd was eager for us to bring out the big guns. This is where our problems started. The weather on this particular night was clear, but the wind was steady and beginning to pick up. At one point, the fireworks sparked a small grass fire, but we easily extinguished it. Afterward, we should have used composite risk management, picked up our fireworks and found a safer location, but, once again, management decided we would stay.

The next few rounds of fireworks went off without a hitch. Then a friend lit a firework that looked like a big sparkler. The sparks from the firework started another grass fire that quickly grew larger than anything we'd previously encountered. We tried to douse the flames with bottled water, but the fire continued to spread. To make matters worse, there were houses just 200 feet away. Long story short, my night ended with the sound of sirens, a burnt jacket, an ashy face and two lungs filled with smoke.

Fortunately, no one was injured and no property was damaged. Thanks to our carelessness, though, our night was ruined. We should have heeded our friend's advice and moved to another location, preferably one free of weeds, shrubs, grass and other flammable materials. We also should have ensured we had a garden hose handy in case an errant firework sparked a fire.

Remember, when you play with fire, you might get burned. This Independence Day, use common sense and think about what you are doing. Fireworks are fun, but they can be dangerous if not properly used.

Listen up, big brother

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 SCOTT WITZ
D Company, 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment
Fort Rucker, Ala.



When I was a kid, I always looked up to my older brother, Steve. I respected him, and he always liked assuming the role of "big brother." Later on, when I got old enough, I joined the Army and was assigned in Germany with the 1st Brigade, 16th Infantry Regiment (part of the "Big Red One"), as a 91B combat medic.

Growing up, I never wore my seat belt because I felt it was uncomfortable. In fact, before going to Germany in 1984, no one ever stressed the importance of wearing seat belts. However, while I was in Germany, I had to go through the gate every day to get to work. The military police would check my ID and ensure everyone was wearing their seat belts. In the beginning, I would put my seat belt on before going through the gate and immediately remove it afterward. Eventually, I changed my view on seat belts and it became second nature to wear them.

When I returned from Germany, I had a new Saab 900 waiting for me in a crate in Virginia. I was very proud, as this was my first new car. I picked up the car from the port and drove it home to Kentucky to show it to my Family. Everyone was very impressed with my success in the Army and my new car. Of course, I immediately gave the keys to Steve and said, "Let's go for a drive!" He got into the driver's seat and cranked the engine.

Steve put the car in reverse and was about to back out of the driveway when I said, "Hey, put on your seat belt." He stopped the car and answered, "Listen, I don't wear seat belts." I had always respected him and followed his instructions, but that was before I joined the Army. I hadn't seen my brother for three years and I had grown up considerably.

I told Steve I would feel much better if he buckled up. He made it clear to me that he didn't wear seat belts — period! I grabbed the emergency brake and told him if he didn't wear his seat belt, the ride in my new car was over. After an angry debate, we both exited the Saab. I tried to explain to him my reasoning — that one never knows when they're going to be involved in an accident — but he didn't want to hear it. He was about to wish he had.

Three weeks later, Steve ran straight into a telephone pole. It was his first car accident. He wasn't wearing his seat belt and he hit the



steering wheel with his chest and his head struck the windshield. Steve was badly injured and placed in intensive care — almost losing his life. After his stay in the hospital, he needed plastic surgery to repair the facial injuries caused when he hit the windshield.

My brother finally told me I'd been right about seat belts. Now he won't even move his car without first buckling up. It was a hard lesson for him to learn, but I'd finally earned the right to say to him, "Listen up, big brother!"«

FYI

During 2007, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates the use of seat belts in motor vehicles saved an estimated 15,147 lives.



IN THE CLOUDS

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 JAMES R BOHANON
A Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, 244th Aviation Brigade
Fort Hood, Texas

The night I learned the most about flying was back in the early 90s when I was a new warrant officer pilot in command (PC) in an OH-58C/S (remember those?). I was flying with a more experienced chief warrant officer as co-pilot. Our mission was to perform night navigation with a twofold objective of gaining more knowledge of the local flying area and building the co-pilot's time toward the 50 hours required for making PC.



The co-pilot was new to Fort Hood, having recently transferred to our unit from Germany. He had planned the flight route to go north for about 15 minutes, then west for about 30 minutes, south for about 30 minutes and then return home. The route roughly paralleled several lightly traveled two-lane state highways.

The weather forecast that night included a 2,000-foot overcast sky. We were briefed to not go below 500 feet above ground level (AGL), so we thought it was going to be an easy, low-risk night vision goggle (NVG) flight. However, a few minutes after turning to the west, we noticed the ceiling had dropped and visibility was less than predicted. As we continued to the west, the ceiling and visibility continued to decrease, forcing us to descend to maintain minimum cloud clearance requirements. I mentioned to the co-pilot a couple of times that I was uncomfortable with the degraded weather conditions, which were getting worse. He tried to reassure me by answering, "This is nothing; I've flown in a lot worse than this. In Germany, it was like this or worse the entire winter."

However, as we moved farther to the west, the ceiling and visibility continued to decrease. We frequently discussed the weather. Before the planned route turned south, the ceiling dropped and the visibility became so low that we decided to turn around and return to the airfield. As a more experienced pilot and navigator, the co-pilot wanted to use this opportunity to teach me how to use the NVG spotlight to illuminate the reflective markers along the centerline of a southbound highway running east of the original route. We turned to the south and flew low above the highway with the NVG spotlight turned toward the reflectors on the road below.

We had been using the lights from the built-up areas to the north and west to illuminate the bottom of the clouds, but when we turned to the south, we turned away from those lights into a much darker, more rural area. I was on the controls, and the co-pilot continued to navigate as we followed the highway south. By this time, we couldn't see much to the sides or front, but we could still see the highway and the reflectors.

It was so dark that it was difficult to see the bottom of the clouds. As I looked out ahead of the aircraft, I kept thinking to myself, "Why can't I see any lights out there? Wearing goggles, I should be able to see lights. Maybe there's a ridgeline ahead of us; I'd better watch the road closely in case it rises quickly." I was surprised when I saw a small cloud pass underneath the aircraft. I instantly announced on the integrated communications system, "There's a cloud passing under the …" then everything outside the aircraft suddenly became bright gray. I immediately experienced spatial disorientation and transferred the controls to the co-pilot.

The co-pilot entered a climb and began a deceleration to the aircraft's maximum rate of climb airspeed as I conducted other steps of our local inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions (IIMC) procedures. During the climb, the co-pilot continued to decrease the airspeed until it was below our targeted airspeed. More than once I mentioned to him we needed to increase our airspeed to maintain the maximum climb airspeed. He continued to slow the aircraft and I again reminded him about the airspeed as I pushed forward on the cyclic. After that, everything was fine.

Those first few seconds in the clouds were some of the most "interesting" in my life. It seemed like an eternity, but we finally broke through the clouds at about 6,000 feet mean sea level. After what we'd been through, seeing the nearly full moon illuminating the cloud tops was an incredibly beautiful sight. Air traffic control gave us vectors to the airfield and we flew an airport surveillance radar approach down through

> "After what **WE'D BEEN THROUGH**, seeing the nearly full **MOON ILLUMINATING** the **CLOUD TOPS** was an **INCREDIBLY** beautiful **SIGHT**."

the clouds. This was uneventful compared to what it was like when we first entered the clouds.

Although some Army pilots have flown thousands of hours without encountering IIMC, I'm not one of them. However, I've met many other Army pilots who have lived through and learned from the experience. I know we made a lot of mistakes that night before we encountered IIMC, and I thank God and my co-pilot that we were able to respond as a crew and help each other out when it really counted.

When I went through the OH-58 track in flight school, we were told not to encounter IIMC and to keep the aircraft out of the clouds. There were several reasons for that, but the primary reason was that back in the early 90s, roughly one in three Army helicopters was destroyed after the crew entered IIMC. So, most crewmembers felt a lot of pressure to stay out of the clouds. Although OH-58s were capable of flying in IMC, the aircraft were not rated to do so.

I wouldn't wish going into IIMC on anybody; however, I believe the lessons I learned that night made me a better pilot. Throughout the years, I've flown Army and civilian helicopters, performed many medevac missions and even encountered IIMC again. I've lived to experience other interesting situations, but I've never had a better "learning experience."

Lessons Learned

The following are the most important lessons I learned that night:

It sounds simple, but if you're wearing NVG and you find yourself wondering why you can't see any lights ahead of your aircraft, it could be because there's a cloud between those lights and your aircraft. Trust your instincts and communicate your concerns to your co-pilot. If things are looking lousy and you're uncomfortable, it's possible things are going to get worse, so prepare yourself mentally to transition to instrument flight while you're still flying in visual meteorological conditions.

Many aircrews entering IIMC have done it while wearing NVG. Some decided to return to base and were quickly surprised to find themselves in the clouds. When things look bad and you're trying to get home but the weather is not cooperating, be mentally prepared for entering IIMC. That should help you relax somewhat. The clouds aren't going to hurt your crew or the aircraft, but the ground will.

The weather "guessers" occasionally do not know what the weather is doing 20 miles away, and sometimes localized areas can be quite different than what you've been briefed. Regardless of what you've been briefed, your weather is what's outside your window. Most of the weather guys are good, but, occasionally, you can get a new guy who might be slightly vague. If the weather outside your aircraft isn't reasonably close to the forecast you received, and you're flying lower than you are comfortable with to maintain cloud clearance, it's probably time to turn around. When you do, resist the temptation to fly a "better" route.

If you're fortunate enough to be flying an aircraft that has a third or even fourth crewmember on



board, talk with your crew. If you're making someone else uncomfortable, it might be time to stop. Don't allow stress to build in the cockpit, and always leave yourself an out. If the weather continues to get worse, talk with your co-pilot and plan what to do if you enter the clouds. If you're not on the controls when your aircraft enters IIMC, make sure your co-pilot is OK before you do anything else and continue to monitor the instruments until you're back on the ground.

If you've never been in IIMC, expect to encounter significant acute stress and spatial disorientation the first time. If you're on the controls and you experience spatial disorientation, let your co-pilot know immediately. Trust your instruments and continue to fly if you are able to; but if you decide to transfer the controls, continue to back up your co-pilot. He could become just as stressed and disoriented as you were, which could affect his instrument scan. Don't worry too much about the radios until the aircraft is under control; just make sure your aircraft doesn't fall out of the clouds. Additionally, it's a good idea to avoid, whenever possible, having a crew mix of two young pilots both trying to build hours.

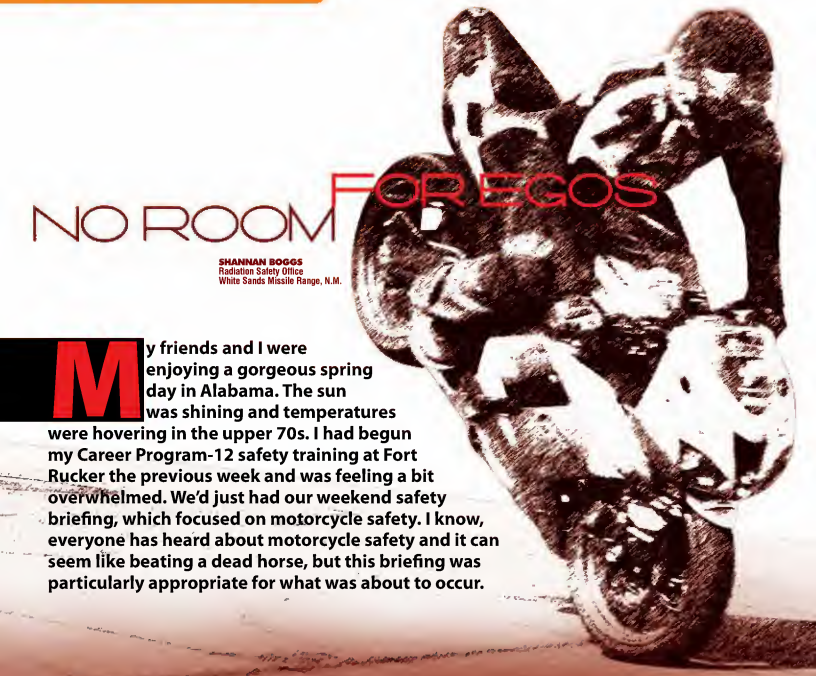
Lastly, remember that after entering IIMC, crewmembers have a tendency to get tense and continue to slow down during the climb. Within a couple months of our IIMC encounter, another aircrew from Fort Hood entered IIMC within a few miles of where we did. They leveled their aircraft and started a climb. Unfortunately, they allowed their airspeed to drop to zero at about 3,000 feet AGL. Later that same year and a few miles to the west, another Fort Hood aircrew entered IIMC and started a climb by pulling back on the cyclic and continued holding it back until the aircraft was going backward and descending. Sadly, both cases resulted in Class A accidents. During the climb, continue to monitor your instruments — especially airspeed — and be ready to assist your co-pilot.

If you find yourself IIMC and you make it through the first three minutes of ensuring the essentials are completed (i.e., leveling the aircraft, adjusting power to climb, adjusting and maintaining airspeed to climb, heading away from known obstacles, transitioning to instruments and overcoming spatial disorientation), the odds are you'll live to see your Family later that night and have a new appreciation for life!«



NO ROOM FOR EGOS

SHANNAN BOGGS
Radiation Safety Office
White Sands Missile Range, N.M.



My friends and I were enjoying a gorgeous spring day in Alabama. The sun was shining and temperatures were hovering in the upper 70s. I had begun my Career Program-12 safety training at Fort Rucker the previous week and was feeling a bit overwhelmed. We'd just had our weekend safety briefing, which focused on motorcycle safety. I know, everyone has heard about motorcycle safety and it can seem like beating a dead horse, but this briefing was particularly appropriate for what was about to occur.

The class had dispersed for the weekend and groups of people gathered to carpool and run errands. I was in one of those groups, and we went to a local store to pick up some supplies for class. We were discussing some of the things we'd learned in class — comparing it to what we'd seen some motorcycle riders doing.

We were casually crossing the parking lot and were only about 20 feet from our car when we heard a loud noise. It was the sound of a rider gunning his motorcycle's engine as he rode by, showing off while going through the parking lot. The sound was so loud that it got everyone's attention, which is what I suspect was the rider's intention. Had I not turned to see what the noise was, I would have missed what happened next.

Almost as if in slow motion, I watched him gun the throttle and try to do a "stoppie" (make his bike stand on the front wheel). The rear wheel lifted off the pavement, but then he lost control. He made a valiant effort to jump off the bike before it flipped over, but didn't quite make it. He landed on the ground, remaining motionless for a few seconds as if trying to comprehend what had just happened. He then jumped to his feet, quickly realized he'd injured his left leg and hopped away from the bike. The crowd watched and offered help,

> Be **RESPONSIBLE**, maintain your motorcycle and **USE SAFE-RIDING SKILLS** so you can **FINISH** your ride on your **BIKE — NOT YOUR BACK.**

but he said he was OK as he went around trying to recover pieces of his bike. He was clearly hurt, but, for some reason, wouldn't admit it.

He had another rider with him who stopped his bike and began helping pick up the broken motorcycle pieces. This accident happened in front of a group of Army safety professionals who offered aid, but it was vehemently rejected. When asked what happened, he said his front wheel locked up, causing the crash. He and his buddy were wearing helmets, jeans, sneakers and T-shirts — not exactly the recommended personal protective equipment for riders. Proper footwear would have at least better protected his ankle. Perhaps getting proper riding training and taking to heart the safety practices he should have learned as a Solider-rider would've enabled him to avoid the accident. Or, perhaps, checking his ego at the door before getting on his bike would've been the crucial factor in preventing this accident.

While I will always remember this accident because of its uncanny timing and relevance to our safety briefing, it is the attitude of the rider I remember most. His utter disregard for safety played a key role in this accident's chain of events. His invincible attitude — along with his denying his own role in the accident — were what concerned me most. Even with all the safety briefings, classes and pamphlets available, how do you get through to a rider who won't accept responsibility?

The point is, even if you're confident in your riding skills, you may not always be able to predict what your bike will do. Be responsible, maintain your motorcycle and use safe-riding skills so you can finish your ride on your bike — not your back. Remember, it's up to you to choose to ride safely and responsibly.«

WANT A "HOT" TIP, SOLDIER?

Here's a tip to boost your "riding" IQ. Go online to https://safety.army.mil/ and click on the "POV & Motorcycle" button. Under "Motorcycle Information" on the left side of the page, select "Surviving Riding Book." You'll get good info on handling difficult or dangerous situations along with maintenance tips and other topics designed to help make riding a pleasure — not a pain.



FYI

Want to sharpen your motorcycle skills in the company of other dedicated, enthusiastic riders? Check out the Army's Motorcycle Mentorship Program at https://safety.army.mil/MMP/.

I have always taken safety seriously. However, after 18 years of sitting through the same safety classes over and over again, they tend to become mundane. In fact, it had gotten to the point where I could predict what the presenter was going to say. So why continue to sit through these classes? I'm an old guy, I've been married most of my career and I do not fall into any of the high-risk categories. I've learned, however, that you're never too old or experienced to do something stupid.

License to Grill

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 KELVIN L. MILLER
UAS Platoon, B Company, 4-3 Brigade Special Troops Battalion
Fort Stewart, Ga.

BOOST YO

Outdoor grilling can be fun, but there is a risk for serious injury and property damage for those who are careless. The following guidelines provided by the Home Safety Council can help you minimize your risk.

- Stay by the grill and pay close attention the entire time food is cooking.
- Designate the grilling area a "No Play Zone," and keep kids and pets well away until grill equipment is completely cool.

It was a four-day weekend — and about two days after the customary holiday safety briefing. I was in my backyard, preparing my grill to barbeque some steaks and chicken. I arranged all of the charcoal into a little pyramid at the bottom of the grill, added lighter fluid and lit it with a lighter. The coals started to burn well and it looked like I had a good fire. I then placed the lighter and lighter fluid a safe distance from the grill and went into the house to check on the meat. When I returned, the coals were turning white and the needle on the grill's temperature sensor was rising. Pretty soon I'd be cooking … or so I thought.

I bounced back and forth between checking the grill and getting the meat ready. After about 20 minutes, though, I noticed the grill was losing heat. I checked the coals and they were not burning like they should. I decided they needed lighter fluid, so I gingerly added more. I thought the coals would immediately ignite the lighter fluid, but they didn't. For some unknown reason, I closed the top of the grill and reached for the lighter.

At first, I could not find the lighter, but then remembered I had placed it away from the grill. After about two minutes, I opened the cover on the grill and attempted to light the coals. But the lighter would not light. After a quick check, I tried again. I was about five feet away from the coals when the lighter ignited. What happened afterward reminded me why I should have paid more attention to those grill safety classes.

I could see the vapor from the evaporated lighter fluid in the air about a second before I started the lighter. Unfortunately, the conscious part of my brain did not send the, "Hey, stupid, don't do that!" signal to the rest of my body in time. The flame from the lighter immediately ignited the vapor, creating a huge fireball. Although the conscious part of my brain had failed me, the subconscious part did not. It was instinct that caused me to close my eyes, turn my head to the right and dive backward away from the fire.

Luckily, the fireball disappeared as fast as it appeared. I laid on the ground in shock over what had just happened. The lower part of my arms, my eyebrows and all of the hair on top of my head turned white. I looked liked a frostbitten old man. I quickly gathered my senses, checked the fire and called my wife outside to help (and give me a lecture).

I was lucky. Besides the temporary loss of hair, I received only mild first-degree burns similar to sunburn. I also learned that just because I've barbequed for more than 25 years (since I was 12) that I'm never too old or experienced to have an accident. Now, I actively participate in holiday safety briefings and fire-prevention classes. I share my story with both older and younger Soldiers.

Lessons Learned

I learned a valuable lesson that day: Never be complacent around flammables. The temperature from the coals, the outside air temperature, the elapsed time and the confined space caused a dangerous buildup of lighter fluid vapor. Once a spark was added, a fireball was almost a definite result.

It is best not to use lighter fluid to start your coals. There are cheap alternatives to lighter fluid that are safer for you and better for the environment. However, if you must use lighter fluid, wear the proper personal protective equipment. Goggles will help protect your eyes, and a long-sleeved, nonflammable shirt can shield your arms. Most importantly, always have respect for fire. Complacency is a sure-fire way to send your barbecue, and possibly more, up in flames.«

UR BARBEQUE IQ

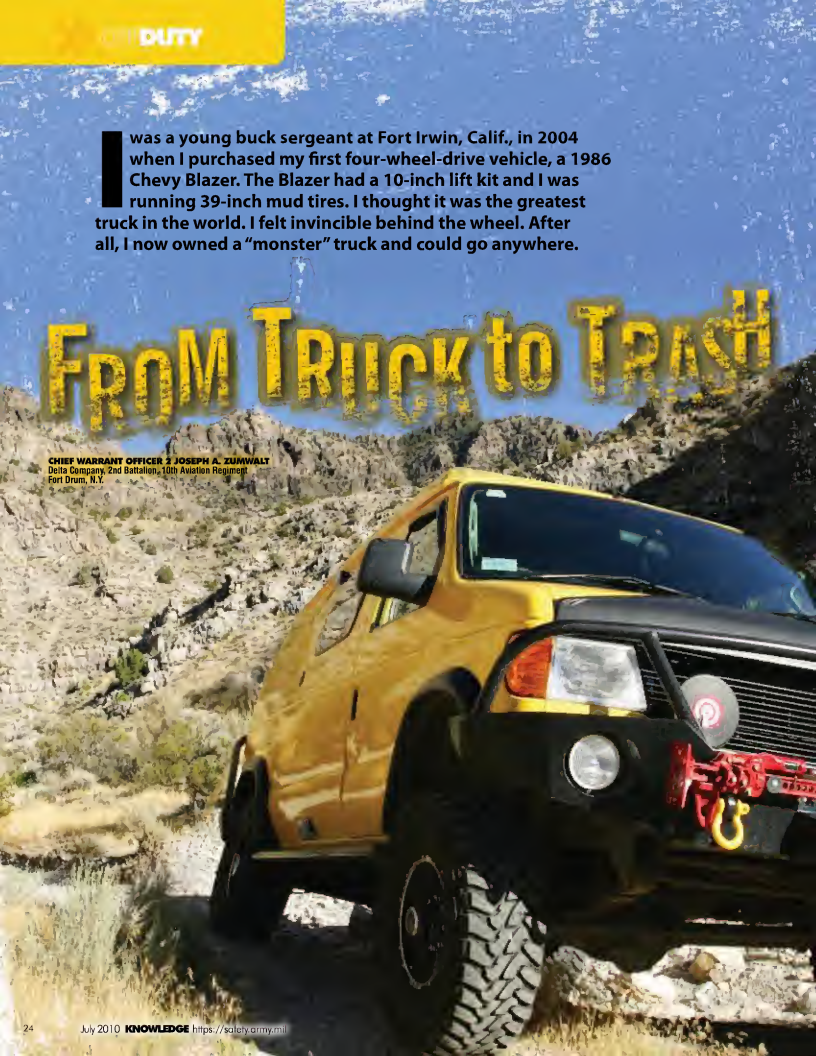
- Before using, position your grill at least 10 feet away from other objects, including the house and any shrubs or bushes.
- Before using a gas grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to ensure it is working properly and not leaking.
- Never use a match to check for leaks. Instead, rub the hose line with a dishwashing liquid and water solution. If you see any bubbles or detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas and don't attempt to light the grill again until the leak is fixed.
- When lighting a charcoal grill, do it right the first time. Choose pre-treated charcoal or carefully follow directions on the charcoal starter fluid can. Once you have lit the charcoal, never add more lighter fluid, as it may cause the can to explode. Use paper or kindling to help a slow-starting grill.

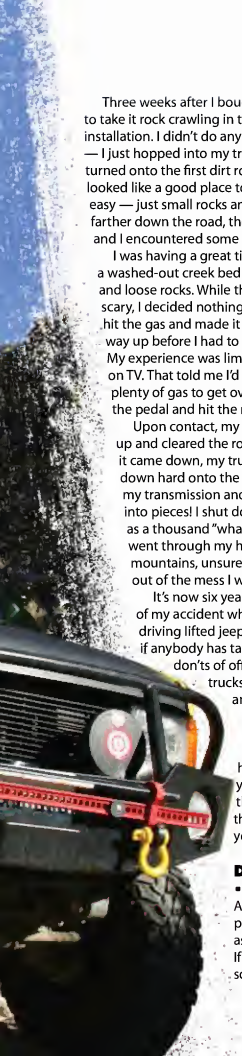
Visit the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's Safe Summer campaign website at https://safety.army.mil/ for videos, posters and other multimedia products highlighting more than 20 popular off-duty summer topics.

I was a young buck sergeant at Fort Irwin, Calif., in 2004 when I purchased my first four-wheel-drive vehicle, a 1986 Chevy Blazer. The Blazer had a 10-inch lift kit and I was running 39-inch mud tires. I thought it was the greatest truck in the world. I felt invincible behind the wheel. After all, I now owned a "monster" truck and could go anywhere.

From Truck to Trash

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JOSEPH A. ZUMWALT
Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment
Fort Drum, N.Y.





> "Had something **BAD HAPPENED**, it would have been days — **IF EVER** — before anybody **FOUND ME.**"

Three weeks after I bought the Blazer, I decided to take it rock crawling in the hills just outside the installation. I didn't do any planning or coordination — I just hopped into my truck and headed out. I turned onto the first dirt road I found because it looked like a good place to start. At first, it was easy — just small rocks and flat terrain. As I got farther down the road, the rocks got bigger and I encountered some challenging hills.

I was having a great time when I came upon a washed-out creek bed full of large boulders and loose rocks. While the climb was steep and scary, I decided nothing was going to stop me. I hit the gas and made it about two-thirds of the way up before I had to slow down for a big rock. My experience was limited to what I had seen on TV. That told me I'd need to give the engine plenty of gas to get over the rock, so I floored the pedal and hit the rock with a bit of speed.

Upon contact, my truck's front end jumped up and cleared the rock. Unfortunately, when it came down, my truck's driveline slammed down hard onto the rock and, in a split second, my transmission and transfer case exploded into pieces! I shut down the truck immediately as a thousand "what-do-I-do-now?" thoughts went through my head. I was alone in the mountains, unsure how I was going to get out of the mess I was in, but, ultimately, I did.

It's now six years later and I often think of my accident when I see young Soldiers driving lifted jeeps and trucks. I wonder if anybody has taught them the do's and don'ts of off-roading. I wonder if their trucks are up to the challenge and pray they won't get stuck like I did. I did many things wrong that day and had to learn the hard way. So you can save yourself the grief I went through, here's a list of things to consider before you go off-roading.

Don't

- Go off-roading alone. Always go with a group, preferably accompanied by as many trucks as possible. If you get stuck, you'll have someone to help you.
- Assume your truck is indestructible. What you don't see on TV are the pit crews standing by in case anything breaks.
- Head into the hills without a map or planning where you are going. Exploring is fun, but doing it blindly is stupid.
- Make vehicle modifications unless you are qualified and know you can do them safely.

Do

- As a minimum, carry water, food and a first aid kit along with a sleeping bag and emergency flares.
- Carry tools and spare parts for things that commonly break.
- Carry a global positioning system navigation aid along with maps and a reliable way to communicate. In the hills, cell phones often don't work, so a CB radio can be a great backup.
- Join a local off-roading club and learn from their experiences. Chances are they have done everything you want to do and can help you learn safely.
- Tell somebody where you are going. Show them on a map and let them know when you expect to be back.
- Ensure you have safety equipment such as a fire extinguisher, roll cage and functional seat belts.
- Assume something could go wrong and have a plan in place to work through it.

In my case, everything worked out well in the end. I was lucky and made it out with a bruised ego and an expensive repair bill. However, it could have been much worse. I could have rolled down that hill, gotten lost in the back country or succumbed to a heat-related injury or other hazard I hadn't considered. Worst of all, I went out alone without letting anyone know where I was going. Had something bad happened, it would have been days — if ever — before anybody found me.

Off-roading should be fun — not fatal. If you apply the "do's and don'ts" I listed, you'll be laying a good foundation for safely enjoying your sport.«



After three deployments to Iraq, I saw a trend developing in my unit. During the last 30 days of each deployment, we had an accident. What was causing this to happen — complacency, nerves, ego or just plain bad luck?

TRENDY SITUATION

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 CARLOS L. PATTERSON
Flight Company, 2nd Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment, 197th Infantry Brigade
Fort Benning, Ga.

My first deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was a learning experience for all of us, from the commanders down to the aircrews. The risk assessment and approval process didn't exist and we lacked the more sophisticated communications systems that we now have in theater. We were frequently based at remote sites and could not readily contact our command elements. This resulted in crews flying tactical missions, training flights and passenger movements unapproved and, oftentimes, unmonitored.

The workload was low for most of the deployment; however, the stress level was moderate due to the initial poor living conditions and not knowing when the unit would redeploy to home station. When we finally received word that we would be redeploying, everyone was relieved that we had less than 30 days remaining in the desert. However, due to complacency, improper planning and/or command involvement, one of our aircraft had a wire strike while flying over a low ridge during this time. The aircraft was damaged, but no one was injured.

My next unit deployment was in support of OIF III. Our unit had an overall concern because we had only nine months dwell time. Fortunately, many things that had been evident during my first deployment had vastly gotten better this time. Communications had improved throughout the areas of operation (AO) and our unit employed a risk management process that ensured each mission was properly briefed and approved at the appropriate level.

Individual crews from the unit were based at forward operating bases for two to three months at a time. We operated as a team, maintaining crew integrity and flying together during these long times away from our command. I received my pilot-in-command (PC) status three months into the deployment and picked up an additional duty as the company unit movement officer.



ONS

On one mission during our last 30 days in country, I had to remain at our base site while my crew flew a mission to a remote site. Another PC was selected to fly the mission. He was very experienced with 1,500 more flight hours than I had. In fact, he was my PC when I was learning the mission and AO. The crew received their mission brief at 0200 and departed for the remote site. While landing, the crew experienced brownout conditions and crashed the aircraft. Fortunately, no one was injured or killed. Now we had two incidents where an aircraft accident occurred during the last 30 days of our deployment.

My third deployment was in support of OIF 07-09. Things had drastically improved over time and we had a great risk assessment and approval process. We received weekly training through pilot's call, and the unit was able to conduct training flights on a routine basis. This time our deployment was for 15 months, which created concerns because of the length of the tour. We were worried about people getting burned out and becoming unsafe. Ironically, the first 14 months went exceptionally well. The unit conducted weekly pilot's call, S-2 briefs and safety updates to make sure each crewmember stayed in the game. We conducted all missions and

training flights in a safe and professional manner.

During the safety portion of our training, I stood up and explained to the unit how the last 30 days of our previous two deployments had ended with a helicopter incident. The company safety officer also reinforced my announcement, stating that complacency and overconfidence often took the place of caution and good judgment.

We were then in that 30-day window of redeploying and I will never forget awakening early in the morning to a call notifying me to recover a crew that had a bad landing. Luckily, no one was seriously injured, but, once again, the accident gremlins were at work and we experienced an incident during our final 30 days in country.

I tried to figure out the root cause of these incidents. The unit had very disciplined aviators who received weekly training while in combat on all three deployments. They all performed above the standard. So what happened during those last 30 days? Did complacency come into play? Did the pilots become overconfident? Was there a chronic fatigue factor that creeps up on our pilots?

Any of the above could influence how our pilots act and let our minds wander. Yes, you are flying a multimillion-dollar aircraft and the enemy could be anywhere; but your mind is already on block leave.

My unit has outstanding pilots. They have a good crew mix, receive approval at the appropriate level, conduct risk assessments and crew briefs, and know their aircraft and its operator's manual. They perform brownout landings without fear. They already know they can land the aircraft because they have performed the maneuver numerous times. So, why aren't their minds in the game?

There has to be a way to keep people focused on the mission at hand. We all have conversations on those long flights. However, we never seem to talk enough about the mission, the risk, the enemy or what if this or that would happen. We have become complacent — perhaps overconfident. Chronic fatigue may also be a factor. We can't let our minds be "gone fishing" while other lives are at stake. It seems the seriousness of our jobs is noticed only when something bad happens.

I figured it was a trend after the second deployment. That was the main reason why I stood up in the safety meeting and said something to my fellow aircrews about staying focused on the mission.



"The company safety officer also **REINFORCED** my announcement, stating that **COMPLACENCY** and **OVERCONFIDENCE** often took the place of **CAUTION AND GOOD JUDGMENT**."

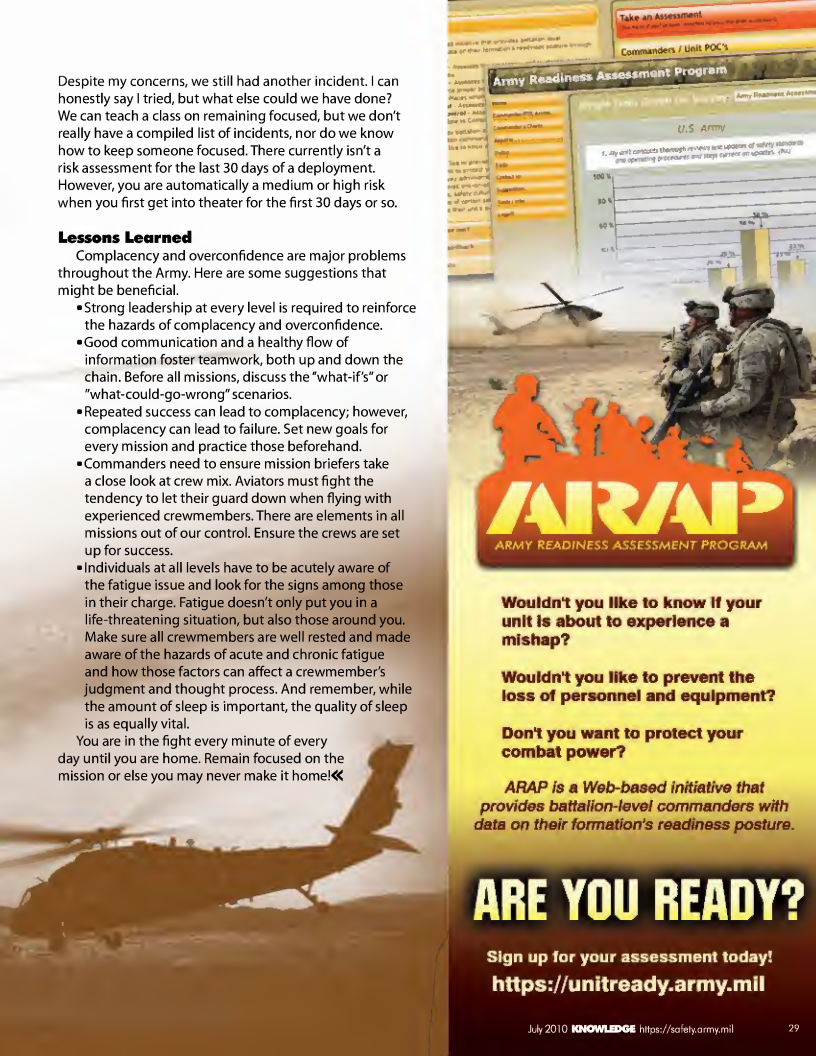
Despite my concerns, we still had another incident. I can honestly say I tried, but what else could we have done? We can teach a class on remaining focused, but we don't really have a compiled list of incidents, nor do we know how to keep someone focused. There currently isn't a risk assessment for the last 30 days of a deployment. However, you are automatically a medium or high risk when you first get into theater for the first 30 days or so.

Lessons Learned

Complacency and overconfidence are major problems throughout the Army. Here are some suggestions that might be beneficial.

- Strong leadership at every level is required to reinforce the hazards of complacency and overconfidence.
- Good communication and a healthy flow of information foster teamwork, both up and down the chain. Before all missions, discuss the "what-if's" or "what-could-go-wrong" scenarios.
- Repeated success can lead to complacency; however, complacency can lead to failure. Set new goals for every mission and practice those beforehand.
- Commanders need to ensure mission briefers take a close look at crew mix. Aviators must fight the tendency to let their guard down when flying with experienced crewmembers. There are elements in all missions out of our control. Ensure the crews are set up for success.
- Individuals at all levels have to be acutely aware of the fatigue issue and look for the signs among those in their charge. Fatigue doesn't only put you in a life-threatening situation, but also those around you. Make sure all crewmembers are well rested and made aware of the hazards of acute and chronic fatigue and how those factors can affect a crewmember's judgment and thought process. And remember, while the amount of sleep is important, the quality of sleep is as equally vital.

You are in the fight every minute of every day until you are home. Remain focused on the mission or else you may never make it home!«





The bicycle has come a long way since its early days. Today's frames are stronger, yet lighter, and the wheels and tires are more durable. What hasn't changed is the need for cyclists to obey the rules of the road.

Rules of the Ro

GEORGE WYATT
Installation Safety Office
Fort Campbell, Ky.

Despite what some may think, there is no special exemption to the law just because you're on a bicycle. In fact, many accidents occur because a cyclist failed to stop at a stop sign, did not signal at an intersection or ran through a red traffic light. Just as cyclists expect motorists to abide by traffic laws, they, too, expect you to follow them.

Where you ride in the lane is also important. Riding just right of the center of the lane gives you a better profile for visibility to other vehicle operators. It also keeps you away from parked vehicles on city streets, which can be an extreme hazard if someone opens a door in your path. Riding just right of the center of the lane also allows you to better maneuver to avoid pot holes and other imperfections in the road and will keep you away from ditches, curbs and parked cars. Assertively maintaining your position just right of center lane will force drivers to pass properly while giving you a margin of safety from those who don't.

Riding your bicycle against traffic may give you a sense of security in that you can see oncoming vehicles. However, motorists don't expect you to be there, and it may be difficult to react to you, especially if you're on a two-lane road and the motorist must deal with you plus oncoming vehicle traffic. When you ride on the wrong side of the road, you approach intersections at angles and positions other motorists are not accustomed to seeing, which means they may not act or react as you anticipate. In some states, it's also illegal to ride against traffic, so check the bicycling laws in your area.





DID YOU KNOW?

According to Army Regulation 385-10, when bicycling on Department of Defense installation roadways during hours of darkness or reduced visibility, bicycles will be equipped with operable head and taillights, and the bicyclist will wear a reflective upper outer garment.

> "UNDERSTANDING the fundamentals of driving will help KEEP children SAFER on their bikes and might even MAKE them BETTER DRIVERS when THEY'RE OLDER."

Riding on sidewalks may be legal in your area; however, it is not considered a "best practice" method of bike riding. Riding on the sidewalk introduces a new hazard — the pedestrian. In most cases, pedestrians don't expect to see a cyclist riding on a sidewalk and may have difficulty reacting. And like riding against the flow of traffic, when you intercept a road intersection from a sidewalk, you do so at angles and positions that motorists are not used to seeing. If it is safe to ride on sidewalks because the density of pedestrian traffic is low, at least consider stopping at each road intersection to make sure it is clear before proceeding. If vehicle traffic is heavy, think about walking your bike through the crosswalk.

Listening to music on your iPod is also a bad idea when you're on a bike, and it's prohibited on Army installations when riding on or adjacent to roadways. Your sense of hearing is important anytime you're riding. Even on a parallel bike route, if you don't see a bad situation developing, you might be able to hear it if you're alert and if your hearing is not obscured by portable listening devices. Remember that intersections, side street accesses and driveways are not normally protected on parallel bike routes, so you must remain alert and be able to see *and* hear your environment.

Younger Riders

Motorists should always anticipate children on bicycles near schools and in residential areas. The speed limits are usually slow in these areas to reduce the risk of vehicle and pedestrian/bicyclist conflicts. Children can be unpredictable when riding, so it's the driver's responsibility to remain alert and avoid accidents.

Parents can also help prevent accidents by teaching their children the rules of the road as soon as they start riding bikes. The state driver's manual is a good place to start. Understanding the fundamentals of driving will help keep children safer on their bikes and might even make them better drivers when they're older. Be proactive in answering the child's questions when they don't understand the technical jargon of the driver's manual. As their bike-riding skills develop, so should their knowledge of the rules of the road.

Off-road Biking

Off-road biking is a popular sport and, in most cases, eliminates the conflict between riders and motor vehicles. But it isn't free of hazards. It is important for the novice off-roader to take it slow and easy on off-road trails and bike routes until they've



FYI

For more information about bicycle helmets and state laws, visit the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute website at http://www.helmets.org/index.htm.

gained some experience at negotiating rough terrain. Experienced off-roaders may have a tendency to occasionally push beyond their own or their bike's limits and take a spill as a result. Avoid overdoing it in areas where even a small mistake could send you and your bike sailing into a ditch, ravine, tree or boulder or even off a cliff.

Pedestrians also enjoy walking or jogging on off-road trails. Be cautious and courteous of others along the route to avoid mishaps. Also, be aware that you're probably in wild animal, reptile and insect country. They may not have a high tolerance for sharing their turf with you. Respect all wildlife and give them a wide berth.

Protective Equipment

On military installations, all bike riders, regardless of age, are required to wear a Consumer Product Safety Commission-approved bike helmet. Some installations also require riders to wear a reflective belt diagonally across the body. Although state and local laws regarding helmets differ, it makes good sense to always wear one. A helmet can mean the difference between surviving and dying in an accident. Ensure your helmet meets or exceeds the impact standards of the American National Standards Institute or Snell Memorial Foundation.



As a cyclist, you should also go out of your way to be visible. Bright clothing (reflective at night) says a lot about your seriousness in sharing the road safely. Your bright or reflective shirt should be long sleeved so others can see your hand signals.

If you bicycle at night, a headlight is another important safety feature and, in some states, a requirement. Self-generating light systems are not the best option. While they shine bright when you are riding with some speed, they dim when riding slowly and go out when you stop. Consider purchasing a battery-powered light system at your local bike shop, preferably one with a tail light.

Bicycle riding is an activity that's fun for the whole Family. When done correctly, it's also safe. Make sure you follow the rules of the road whenever taking your Schwinn for a spin.«





The duty day was finally over as I exited the gate at Fort Knox, Ky., vaguely paying attention to a sign warning drivers to watch out for motorcycles on the roads. As I drove in the misty-gray weather, I thought anybody riding a motorcycle in these conditions had to be slightly nuts.

Nuts and Bolts:

Now You See 'Em ...

SGT. 1ST CLASS JOHN WINGFIELD
D Company, 8th Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment
U.S. Army Reserve
Fort Knox, Ky.

The trip was largely uneventful as the mist developed into full-fledged rain showers about halfway home. As I drove, I glanced ahead at the taillights of a tractor-trailer and noticed something didn't seem quite right. As I got closer, a dark shape took form. In less than a heartbeat, I realized I was approaching a motorcyclist clothed in black from head to toe. The only thing that caused me to notice him was his motorcycle's barely visible taillight.

Fortunately, I had time to slow down and give him some space. If it hadn't been for his taillight, I wouldn't have seen him because he and the rest of his bike blended into the rear of the semi's trailer. This incident

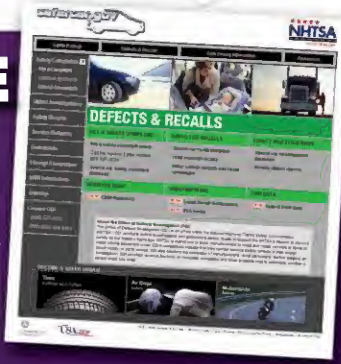
drove home the point about always making yourself visible, especially in less-than-optimal driving conditions. It also showed how important it is to be vigilant when driving in bad weather, and to look even farther ahead for signs of trouble.

Until this incident occurred, I never really paid attention to the issue of riders wearing reflective material. Sure, I always wore at least a reflective waist belt when riding on post, but I almost never wore it when riding off post for fear of looking like a geek in all my leather gear.

Well, that's changed since this incident. I now have a strip of reflective material sewn across the front and back tops of my vests and a strip of reflective tape across the rear of my helmet. I might look like a geek, but when visibility is less than perfect, I'll stand a better chance of being seen by drivers who may not be paying full attention to the road and others around them.«

AUTOMOTIVE ALERTS

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
www.nhtsa.gov/



With all the attention being directed toward Toyota, it is important to note that other manufacturers are also recalling vehicles. A thorough check of the current National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recalls shows some problems owners need to be aware of.

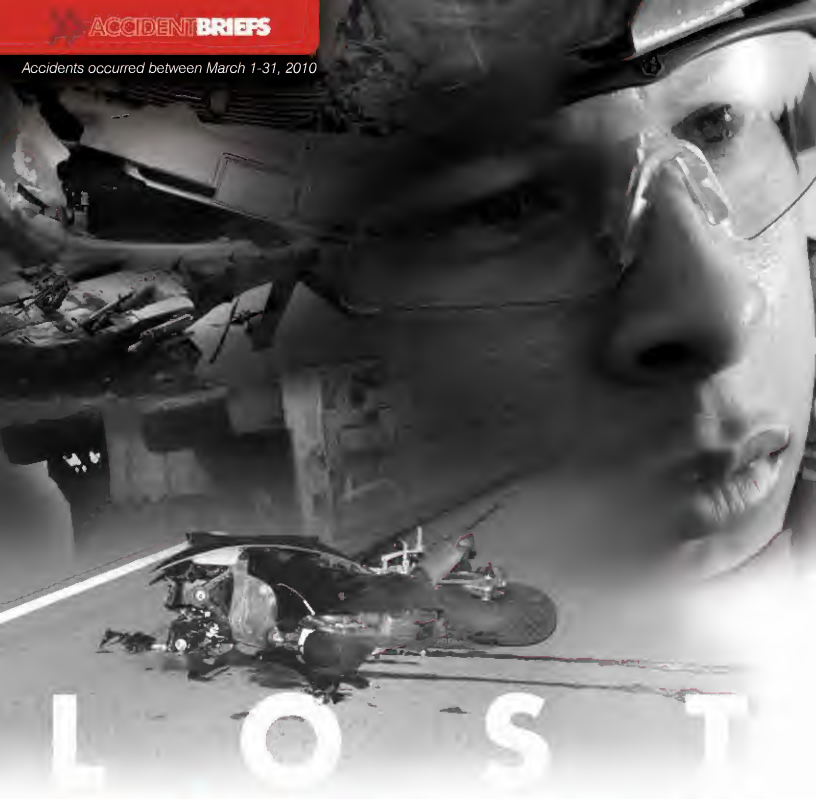
The most notable example involves the air bag inflators in the 2001-2002 Honda Accord; 2002 Honda CRV and Odyssey; 2002-2003 Acura 3.2 TL; and 2003 Honda Pilot and Civic. These inflators can rupture during air bag deployment and send metal fragments through the air bag cushion material, potentially injuring or killing occupants. If you have one of these vehicles, contact Honda Automobile Customer Service at 1-800-999-1009.

Other vehicles that made it onto the recall list include the 2007-2008 Honda Fit for water intrusion affecting the master power window switch; 2010 Toyota Camry for potential wear-related perforation of the left-rear brake tube; 2010 Toyota Tacoma for propeller shaft cracks; 2004 Saab 9-3 sedan for malfunctioning front seat belt retractors; 2010 Hyundai Tucson for accidental air bag deployment; and the 2010 Mitsubishi Galant for potential automotive transmission fluid leaks.

Do you own one of the vehicles on this list? If so, here are some important contact numbers for you: Toyota, 1-800-331-4331; Saab, 1-800-620-7668 or contact online at www.gmownercenter.com; Hyundai, 1-800-633-5151; and Mitsubishi, 1-800-222-0037.

Didn't see your car on this list but want to visit NHTSA's online site to check your particular make and model? Go online to http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/ and check under "Defects and Recalls." Remember, if you are not the vehicle's original owner, you may not have received recall notices from the manufacturer.«

Accidents occurred between March 1-31, 2010



AVIATION

OH-58D(I)

CLASS C

- The aircraft incurred an engine power turbine speed of 120 percent during run-up for flight.

UH-1H

CLASS C

- The flight crew encountered loss of tail rotor effectiveness during a pinnacle landing. The aircraft experienced an overtorque.

UH-60L

CLASS A

- The flight crew encountered brownout during takeoff from the forward operating base and crashed.

C-12R1



CLASS A

- The aircraft experienced a hard landing during which the right landing gear separated. The aircraft sustained extensive damage to the fuselage, props and wings.

GROUND

ACV



CLASS A

- A Soldier was killed when his Stryker overturned during a convoy operation, pinning him underneath the vehicle. The driver and another Soldier were treated at a medical center. The driver's leg was amputated as a result of his injuries, and the passenger suffered pelvic injuries.

- Two Soldiers were killed when their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle rolled over during a six-vehicle combat logistics patrol convoy. The driver of the MRAP was attempting to pass a civilian dump truck when she lost control, rolling it multiple times. The gunner and driver were pronounced dead at a medical center.

- A Soldier was killed when he was ejected from an MRAP that overturned. At the time of the accident, the driver of the vehicle was negotiating a steep, winding road and lost control, causing the vehicle to roll multiple times. The vehicle commander was evacuated to a medical center, where he was pronounced dead.

Explosive/Fire



CLASS A

- A Soldier died from smoke inhalation following a fire at his off-post residence.

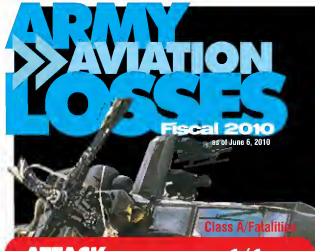
Personnel Injury



CLASS A

- A Soldier suffered fatal injuries during a static-line airborne operation when his parachute drifted and became tangled in power lines. He was evacuated to a medical facility, where he later died.





ATTACK	1/1
RECON	2/4
UTILITY	5/5
CARGO	1/0
TRAINING	0/0
FIXED-WING	2/0
UAS	3/0
TOTAL	14/10



AMV	10/5
ACV	7/6
PERSONNEL INJURY includes weapons-handling accidents	15/16
FIRE/ EXPLOSIVE	2/1
PROPERTY DAMAGE	0/0
TOTAL	34/28

PLAN AHEAD BEFORE HITTING THE ROAD,

OR IT MIGHT HIT BACK.

TRAVEL RISK TRiPS PLANNING SYSTEM

Be realistic about the distance you can cover in a day. Find out before hitting the road. Use the easy, online TRiPS tool today!

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DRIVING

POV



CLASS A

- Two Soldiers suffered fatal injuries when their vehicle collided with a trailer towed by a pickup truck, turned broadside and was then struck by an oncoming tractor-trailer. At the time of the accident, the roads were snow-packed and icy.
- A Soldier was driving home from drill when he crossed into the oncoming lane and collided head-on with an approaching van. The Soldier, who was not wearing his seat belt, was ejected and suffered fatal injuries. Three people in the van were also killed in the accident.

POM



CLASS A

- A Soldier was riding his motorcycle when he was cut off by a vehicle crossing four lanes of traffic. The Soldier, who was wearing his helmet and personal protective equipment, collided with the rear of the vehicle and was killed.

Pedestrian



CLASS A

- A Soldier was running alongside a state route when a car went off the road and struck him from behind, causing fatal injuries. The Soldier, who was wearing a reflective belt, was running in the same direction as traffic.

POV DRIVING LOSSES Fiscal 2010



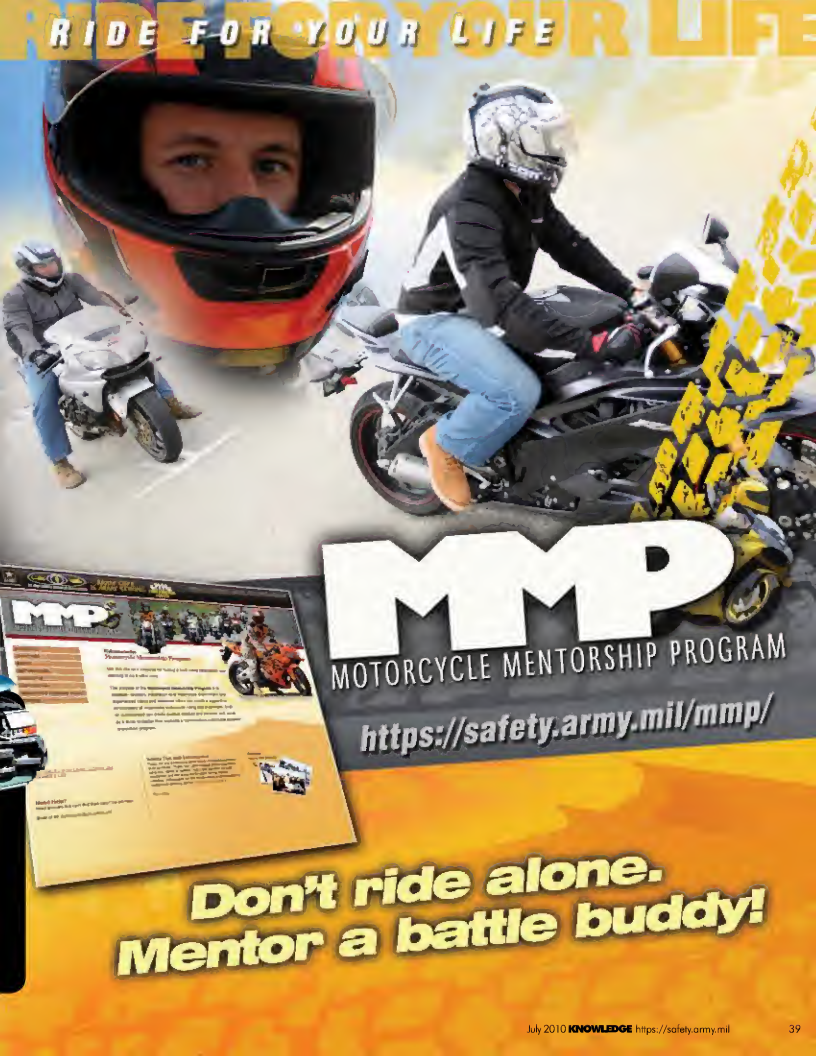
as of June 8, 2010

	Class A/Fatalities
CAR	28/29
SUV/JEEP	6/7
TRUCK	4/4
MOTORCYCLE	19/19
PEDESTRIAN	8/9
OTHER*	2/2

*Includes vans and ATVs

70 TOTAL DEATHS

Fiscal 2009: 74 3 year average: 76


RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE
MMP
MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
https://safety.army.mil/mmp/
Don't ride alone.
Mentor a battle buddy!


ARE YOU A SHARPSHOOTER?
The Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox contains information and tools related to the safe handling of privately owned weapons, in addition to resources to establish and maintain effective range and weapons safety programs with military weapons.
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